

Subject: Effective Technical Communication

Unit 1- Dynamics of Communication

Topics Covered are:

Definition and process

Kinesics

Proxemics

Para linguistic features

Importance of Interpersonal and inter cultural communication in today's communication

Communication

There is difference between to communicate and communicate effectively. In professional situation, when people communicate, they stand out because of the manner and the way present in front of audience. Communication is a two way process. It can never happen in solo or single handed. It is a way to share ideas, feelings, and knowledge, to express emotions or to convey message. Voice, friendly body language, comfortable physical space or distance also plays an important role while we communicate with others.

Process:

Communication always happens between two or more than two persons. It can never take place single handed. A talk between two, a professional or academic presentation, interviews, meetings, News everything around is communication.

It has cycle as below:

Sender: The generator of the message/ beginner of the process/ the one who sends the message

Encoding: Making process of the message/ converting Ideas, knowledge, feelings in uniform language that all can understand

Channel/ Medium: the platform one uses to share the message for ex. Newspaper, News Channels etc.

Receiver: one who receives the message or to whom the message is intended to be sent

Decoding: Dividing process of the message to grasp and interpret

Feedback: Response on the sent message or information

Process starts with a sender who encodes the message in friendly language. He/she sends the message using channel or medium as a common platform to share and receive. On other end of communication, there is a receiver who receives a message and decodes the language with proper interpretation. After receiving the message, receiver responds according to the need of sender either in body language or by words.

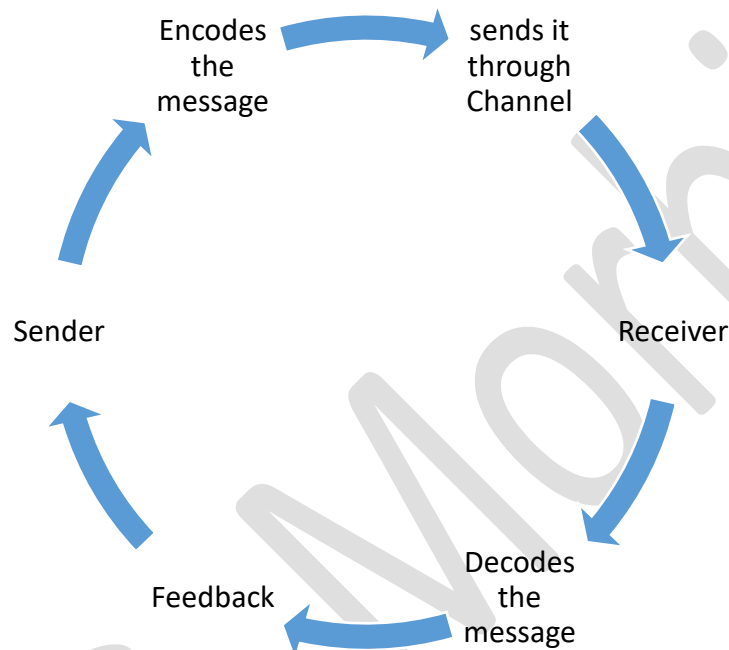


Figure 1: Process of communication

Kinesics

Kinesics is study of body language. It refers to all the expressions that we share by means of our body movements and not through words. It adds life in our verbal communication. It can be seen at two levels: 1. Gestures 2. Postures

Gestures:

Gesture is the movement made by hands, arms, shoulders, head and torso. A well timed gesture enhances impact and adds greater value to what is being said. It clarifies the ideas or reinforces them. Gestures are numerous and meanings attached to them are diverse. Hence one must use gestures carefully by associating it with right message. The gesture at one place might carry different meaning at another place. For ex. Gesture for time out stands equally right for tea break. But one must learn to associate correctly.

Some gestures have commonly understood meanings like waving indicates hello or good bye. Thumbs up shows appreciation or agreement. Pointing with finger means showing something. Hands on knees shows readiness.

Dos and Don'ts

1. Keep your hand movements in control. Let them not have the life of their own.
2. Avoid aggressive or provoking gestures. For ex. Pointing out someone with finger to insult while angry
3. Don't rub your palms or face while speaking or listening to others. It suggests lack of confidence and uncertainty.
4. Don't keep your arms folded against your chest. It suggests fear or evasion.
5. Don't keep your hands locked behind or don't wave your body too much while walking.
6. Do not lean on to a lectern or interview table as reveals lack of confidence.
7. Don't tug on your shirt sleeves or collars as it shows your discomfort.
8. Don't wring your hands or play with rings on your fingers. Don't scratch or crane your neck as it reveals uncertainty and doubt.
9. Don't lock your gestures. Use your fore arm to communicate mostly and friendly open finger gestures.

Postures:

Postures refer to the way we sit, stand and carry ourselves while doing everything. Postures are important part of personality we let others to see us. Certain mannerism should be followed while we communicate with others. For ex. One must not sit in slumped posture in interview as it indicates low spirit. To make disturbing foot noise while walk suggest carelessness and being not alert about surroundings. Erect posture indicates high spirit, energy and interest. To lean forward indicates openness and honest to share and receive ideas. Opposite to that, to lean backward indicates defensive mood or disinterestedness. Thus one must learn to sit or stand in balanced portion.

Dos and Don'ts

1. Look straight while walking. Avoid looking outside the windows or doors or up to the ceiling.
2. Don't let your shoulders droop.
3. Lift your footwear clearly off the floor. While walking avoid dragging them on floor.
4. Don't slouch while walking or sprawl sitting.
5. Don't sit on edge of chair. It communicates unease and discomfort.
6. Avoid crossing your legs while sitting or standing before your audience.

7. Avoid reclining against back of the chair.
8. Keep shifting your body weight as you stand before your audience.
9. Communicate your ease and confident by straight sitting posture.
10. Use graceful and confident posture showing respect while you sit, walk or stand.

Proxemics

Proxemics stands for physical space in interpersonal relations. The way people use physical space in professional or personal life tells a lot about them. It enhances comfort while communicating with others according to the need of the situation. Physically, all of us are free. But we are uncomfortable at crowded places. We generally avoid boarding on crowded buses or trains. Neither do we like to sit on benches where others are sitting. In formal situations, it becomes very important to understand and respect the territories of other professionals. People don't like if you stand very close while speaking to them in formal situations. On the other hand, it is not advisable to stand too far away from listeners or speakers. It may create a sense of alienation or lack of warmth. It should be followed according to the following.

1. **Intimate zone:** The distance stretches from 15 -46 cm. No stranger is allowed in this zone. It is only shared by family, spouses, parents, children and close relatives or close friends. Generally, no one should enter this zone from professional life.
2. **Personal Zone:** This zone stretches from 46cm -1.2 m. Close friends, relatives, colleagues, peers etc. fall in this tier. The distance maintained by people in a zone varies from a couple of inches to feet and is indicative of warmth or the necessity to maintain formality in relations. It fuses with each other. It is possible to enter this zone from professional front.
3. **Social zone:** This zone stretches from 1.2m -3.6 m. We maintain this distance while interacting with strangers. In professional gatherings, people sometimes are seen maintaining this distance. People are more cautious in their movements.
4. **Public zone:** This zone stretches 3.6 onwards. In most professional communication situations, this zone is maintained by speakers and their audience. Actual distance maintained by a person might be different from culture to culture. Here the audience is an impartial observer and audience is free to do whatever they like. Political influential figures, celebrities, spiritual heads have to maintain this distance for security reasons.

Paralinguistic

Paralinguistic features are non-verbal cues that help you to give urgency to your voice. Your voice is your trademark. Therefore it is useful to understand the characteristic nuances of voice.

1. Quality

Each one of us has a unique voice and its quality depends upon its resonating mechanism. It may be rich and resonant, soft and alluring, thin and nasal, hoarse and husky, or harsh and irritating. One can make conscious efforts to improve one's quality of voice.

2. Volume

Volume is the loudness or the softness of the voice. Your voice should always project but need not always be loud. You should vary your volume so as to make your voice audible and clear.

3. Pace/Rate

Rate is the number of words which you speak per minute. It varies from person to person and from 80 to 250 words per minute. But the normal rate is from 120 to 150 words. Cultivate your pace so as to fit in this reasonable limit. Use pauses to create emphasis. A well-paced, varied message suggests enthusiasm, self-assurance and awareness of audience.

4. Pitch

Pitch refers to the number of vibrations per second of your voice. The rise and fall of the voice conveys various emotions. A well balanced pitch results in a clear and effective tone.

5. Articulation

Speakers should be careful not to slop, slur, chop, truncate, or omit sounds between words or sentences. If all the sounds are not uttered properly, the flow of understanding gets interrupted and deters the listener from grasping the meaning of the message. Develop in yourself the ability to speak distinctly; produce the sounds in a crisp and lucid manner.

6. Pronunciation

If articulation means speaking out all the sounds distinctly, then pronunciation requires us to speak out sounds in way that is generally accepted. The best way is to follow British Received pronunciation. Speaking of second language must not be affected by MTI (Mother tongue Influence) one should be careful enough to pronounce individual sounds along with word stress according to the set norms.

Wherever there is confusion, always consult a good dictionary and try to pronounce it correctly.

7. Voice Modulation

Modulation refers to the way we regulate, vary or adjust the tone, pitch, and volume of the sound or speaking voice. Modulation of voice brings flexibility and vitality to your voice, and you can express emotions and sentiments in the best possible way.

8. Pauses

A pause is a short silence flanked by words. A pause in speaking lets the listener reflect on the message and digest it accordingly. It helps you glide from one thought to another one. It embellishes your speech because it is a natural process to give a break. One must avoid verbal pauses like 'Ummm', 'Hmmm', 'Aaaa' as this is a sign of a confused mind. It breaks the link of the audience to follow your thoughts. One must be clear-headed while speaking as it makes the message easy to grasp.

Interpersonal and Inter-cultural communication

Interpersonal communication:

Communication from one human being to other human beings is known as interpersonal communication. The person connects to person to share ideas or emotions, creativity, to bring outputs, problem solving etc. it builds a strong human network at work place so that work can be completed faster and with accuracy. Sharing of problems shall lead to multiple options according to suggestions given by others. This communication helps to build rapport with colleagues or peers and makes things easy.

In personal life, interpersonal communication helps to build trust and confidence. We communicate our happiness, sorrows or confusions with friends and family. That's how we feel connected more and makes life easy to live.

In professional life, communication positively with other human beings makes workplace enjoyable and builds rapport with other colleagues and peers. It also adds to career growth by adding in mutual learning and capacity building. It helps to solve common problems with multiple solutions.

Inter Cultural Communication:

Communication between two or more cultures is called intercultural communication. We must have experienced the cultural difference in our colony with neighbours or in friend circle. People are from different social back ground or with communal diversity. Every one of us have different living standard, likings and dis likings, different religious rituals or beliefs to follow.

At workplace, understanding of intercultural communication helps us to build and maintain harmony as well as respect for different culture. It caters the professional need also as understanding one particular helps to produce product or the services according to the need of community or religion. For ex. Kite festival has huge importance in Gujarat and hence connected to it, every product is sold with high demand during that season. Durga Puja in Bengal or life style of Punjabis, food habits of south Indian or North Indian are different from each other.

We might have colleagues with different cultural background at work place. Communication with cultural diverse people strengthens our maturity and helps to serve better at workplace.